



**NORTH DAKOTA**  
DEPARTMENT *of* HEALTH

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## NEWS RELEASE

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### **North Dakota Department of Health Expands Priority Groups for Influenza Vaccine**

*Adults age 50 to 64 and close contacts of people in high-risk groups will now be eligible for influenza vaccine in areas of the state where vaccine supply can meet the demand*

BISMARCK, N.D. – Today, the North Dakota Department of Health (NDDoH), following recommendations made by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), expanded the list of priority groups recommended to receive influenza vaccine this flu season.

Effective today, in areas of the state where vaccine supply is adequate to meet demand, the priority groups for influenza vaccine will include adults age 50 to 64 and out-of-home caregivers and household contacts of people in high-risk groups. People in the high-risk groups for serious complications from influenza include people age 65 or older, children younger than 2, pregnant women, and people of any age who have certain underlying health conditions such as heart or lung disease, transplant recipients, or people with AIDS.

“Although we worked hard to get people in the highest risk groups vaccinated first, less than 40 percent of North Dakota adults in the priority groups reported receiving influenza vaccine, according to a national survey,” said state epidemiologist Larry Shireley. “We still have vaccine left in the state that we don’t want to go to waste. Expanding the risk groups will give more North Dakotans the chance to protect themselves from influenza this season.”

Because the NDDoH has an adequate supply of childhood influenza vaccine, all children age 6 to 23 months are recommended to be vaccinated. Most of these children require two doses of vaccine. Parents are urged to contact their child’s primary care provider or local public health unit for influenza vaccine.

Only 21 cases of influenza have been reported in North Dakota so far. Shireley says that it’s important to remember that flu season in North Dakota often lasts until May. “It’s not too late to

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get your flu shot,” Shireley said.

People should contact their local public health department or primary care provider to find influenza vaccine in their area.

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